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LABOUR AND THE  
EMPIRE



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# LABOUR AND THE EMPIRE

BY

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

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LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN

156, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1907

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Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

TO  
MY FRIENDS

CALLED

*“LITTLE ENGLANDERS”*

WHO GUARDED THE HONOUR OF THEIR  
COUNTRY THROUGH TRYING YEARS



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*Socialism being one of the most important subjects of to-day, its opponents and supporters alike need a frank, precise, and absolutely authentic account of its aim and methods. The Publisher wishes by means of this series to put clearly before the public a complete conspectus of the present policy of the English Socialists and the Independent Labour Party. To ensure authority and precision, arrangements have been made with the acknowledged leaders, in action and thought, of the new movement to contribute volumes to the "Labour Ideal" series on those branches of Socialism with which they are particularly connected.*

*The Publisher does not, of course, hold himself responsible for the opinions of the writers.*

Make England stand supreme for aye,  
Because supreme for peace and good,  
Warned well by wrecks of yesterday,  
That strongest feet may slip in blood.

*Australia to England*, by JOHN FARRELL.

## INTRODUCTION

THIS work is of necessity a broad and general outline. To have supported my conclusions by detailed considerations would have meant a work planned on an altogether different scale from this. That is impossible for me. But I have felt that, as Time's whirligig has compelled us to restate so many political opinions in order to bring them into relation with the altered circumstances of life, the question of Imperial policy requires to be reconsidered in view of the many changes which have recently taken place in means of communication and world politics. My feeling has been intensified by a careful study of what is called Imperialist literature, and more particularly by listening to speeches delivered by the Imperialist leaders in Parliament during the session of 1906. It seems to me that despite their pretensions, that literature and those speeches are practically devoid of any Imperial principle. There is much brag, there is plenty of dramatic description, there is a great deal of deference to the Colonies,



there is a wealth of patriotic phrasing in them—most of it meaningless and incapable of being reduced to definiteness; but there is rarely the illumination of an Imperial ideal. When practical Imperialism is discussed, the guiding idea seems to be that the Colonies should be allowed to do what they like. A statement of the Mother Country's position in the British hegemony is rarely made, whilst on questions of morals there is a cowardly shirking of the fact that the white man in the tropics does deteriorate, and, as representative of our British civilisation and political tradition, requires, in consequence, to have a moral standard imposed upon him. Whoever admits this well-established fact of the deterioration of whites in the tropics is generally accused by the Imperialist politician of "maligning Englishmen."

I live in no fool's paradise, however, regarding some of the proposals I make in this book. I know that my discussion of an Imperial standard will be unfamiliar to many people in our Imperial States, and will be regarded by them as a denial of their full rights of self-government. That will happen in spite of what I have written to the contrary, for I have recently had the

advantage of reading criticisms on my position by some of the Colonial Press. But I am also assured that many of the most thoughtful men whom I recently met, and with whom a discussion on Imperial questions was a great educational advantage, are coming more and more to my point of view—the point of view I expressed during the Natal debates in the House of Commons—as they grapple at closer quarters with Imperial problems. An Imperial standard, however, and an Imperial authority will grow; they will not be enacted. That is only expressing the idea that the Empire is organic and develops its own forms. The “bombastic” Imperialism (Professor Seeley’s word) which flung us into the maelstrom of the South African War is a poor bedraggled thing now, and there is a very grave danger that in consequence of that Imperial escapade the Imperial States may adopt policies and grow into a state of mind which will be tantamount to a disruption of the Empire; for, if the British Empire is ever to be broken up, the fatal act will be done when nobody is aware that anything very revolutionary has taken place.

I am perhaps too bold in associating the

- Labour Party with this book. The Labour  
- Party has as yet sanctioned no Imperial  
- policy, though in its affiliation with the  
International Committee, its attitude during  
the South African War, and its support of  
my intervention on the Natal rebellion, it  
has clearly indicated its sympathies and the  
political axioms which it would lay down as  
the basis of such a policy. At any rate, all  
I can say is, that it seems to me that in  
general outline my conclusions are those  
which the Labour Party ought to adopt if it  
is to be consistent with the principles of its  
domestic politics.

I have not discussed such questions  
as what is a fair contribution from the  
Colonies to the Imperial Defence forces.  
These matters cannot be settled until we  
know what our conception of Empire is and  
how it is to be organised. On this point  
the Colonies think one thing and the Mother  
Country another, and words are used by  
Imperialists on both sides, either in igno-  
rance or dishonesty, for the purpose of  
cloaking these differences and of creating a  
sentiment which will be useful for partisan  
purposes, and which does not correspond to  
the facts of our Imperial relationships.

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I

THE EMPIRE AND  
IMPERIALISM





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# LABOUR AND THE EMPIRE

## I

### NATIONAL EXPANSION

REALISTIC history does not lend itself to stage treatment. The magnificent hero with whose birth an epoch begins, plays but a comparatively minor part in the delicate intricacy of cause and effect which go to make up the progression of historical events. The creative will and foresight of the individual become the floats which indicate irresistible tendencies of currents rather than the origin of great changes, when the outstanding results of history are patiently traced to their manifold sources.

Nothing illustrates this view of history better than the story of the British Empire. Three hundred years ago our country was a small European state, divided by the ancient political feuds which separated Scotland and England, occasionally launched

into the stormy waters of European politics, forming alliances, engaging in the political and religious strife of the time, growing rich, laying the foundations of sea power—but an island with no footing beyond its own coasts. And yet its destiny was fulfilling itself.

At the end of the fifteenth century Columbus had discovered America, and England immediately found the world of commerce opened to it. It could not be hampered by hostile rivals on the western ocean as it was on the Mediterranean, or elbowed by competitors in a more advantageous situation as it was on the Baltic. Portugal and Spain had sped westwards before England, but, as has often been the fate of pioneers, the spirit which led them into the wilderness prevented them from enjoying the riches they discovered there. The merchant adventurers of Bristol were on the heels of the Portuguese and the Spaniards, but happily their early voyages were failures, and from the fever of debauch, of slavery, of exploitation, which fell upon Spain and Portugal, England was saved by its first failures in commercial adventures.

In the meantime the country was laying the foundations of sound national industry. A substantial capitalist class was growing up. The rulers, already showing indications of a love of liberty and intellectual and religious toleration, were welcoming to our cities the skilled and industrious heretics and nonconformists, who on the Continent were being offered the alternative of death or exile. Whilst Spain and Portugal were exploiting America, England was increasing its national wealth, creating a fine type of manhood, and developing a national spirit. It was storing energy for expansion. Meanwhile the glamour of gold and the sentiment of Christian propaganda had faded, and when England stretched out its hand to grasp the new lands, it was with the less romantic intention of opening up new markets for its commerce, and of discovering new fields for its people to settle upon.

From about the middle of the sixteenth century, the pirate admirals like Hawkins and Drake began to scour the seas and plunder Spanish and Portuguese ships, but until the more sober commercial spirit of the Stuart times had taken the place of

the romantic character of the Tudor adventurers of whom Raleigh was the last, Colonial settlement was not made the basis of national enrichment.

At first, the settlements being purely commercial, were promoted by trading companies, the nation, or more strictly speaking, the Crown, only playing the part of a recipient of the fees which the companies had to pay for their charters, and, in practice, standing behind the companies as their guardian in case of necessity. On such a basis London and Plymouth began to establish settlements on the American sea-board, the first of which was Virginia, and the most remarkable in history, the New England communities.

In the early history of these Colonial settlements we can study the transition from the old spirit of exploitation to the new one of industrial development and political settlement, and the conflict between the two motives is aptly enough focussed in the work and correspondence of a man typical in purpose and name of the solid commercial spirit of the Stuart times — John Smith. Smith was one of the settlers on the James River, Hudson



Bay. The little community, still bewitched by visions of rich gold mines and by hopes that the discovery of a north-west passage would bring it wealth without labour, was going to wreck, when Smith thundered at it to till the soil, pursue commerce, make friends with the Indians, and settle down. He wrote to London demanding to know why romantic vagabonds, explorers, and gold-seekers were sent to a land which only required carpenters and farmers.

The same process of settlement on the land, after adventure upon the sea, was being pursued in the West Indies, and during the whole of the seventeenth century a stream of English emigrant adventurers sought a home and fortune in the New World.

The national strife of Europe found a wild echo in the warring raids of French, English, and Dutch in these lands, and the conflicts raged whether the peoples at home were in peace or at war. The lands were as yet no man's lands and every man's lands, and upon them Greater Britain, Greater France, Greater Holland strove to swallow each other up.

By the end of the seventeenth century



our trading flags flew over plantations, stretching in a narrow strip from Newfoundland to Florida, over several islands of the West Indies, over stations on the West, East, and North-east of India and in Java.

The struggle for supremacy in these new lands reached a climax in the next century. The rival trading interests of the different companies, inflamed and organised as part of the national struggles which were exhausting Europe, make Colonial history throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century one endless series of raids, invasions, and conquests, whilst behind the din and the conflict the trading companies were increasing their commerce and establishing systems of civil government. The dominions of Great Britain easily eclipsed in extent and importance those of any other state. The trading settlement became a political community. Clive gave us the subject state of India; Wolfe, the self-governing democracy of America.

The process of expansion had not been the carrying out of a policy. We must rather think of the British people impelled by a certain momentum and careering along

certain commercial highways, not so much guided by individual will and foresight, as having its course determined by the resistance on the one hand and the facilities on the other, which the road offered.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the expanded nation became conscious of itself. An economic Colonial policy had been clearly formulated, based upon the current conceptions of how trade enriched a nation. But whilst this was being matured, another result of this world commerce and capitalist industry was also ripening. Liberal politics were permeating the life of the nations. The national spirit was growing, democracy was preaching, the spirit of iconoclastic rational inquiry was agitating.

The custodians of the British dominions, drawn as they were from the classes who had sought refuge on the pinnacles of their ancient rights and privileges when the deluge of Liberalism began to fall, faced the new conditions doomed to come to grief. An insignificant dispute grew into a cause of rebellion; George Washington became famous; the American States severed their connection with us. The

British conception of the uses of a Colony led to disruption.

The end of the eighteenth century found the Empire maimed, though its hold on India, the land of subject races, had been enormously increased owing to the inevitable opposition of the native rulers to the equally inevitable expansion of the East India Company.

During the nineteenth century the tendency of these commercial outposts to become political communities, developing self-government or passing under Downing Street control, increased. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa became to all intents and purposes independent nationalities; the old Chartered Companies disappeared and their territories passed under the control of the Crown, or became self-governing; Greater Britain from being a commercial became a political expression. And as this process went on, Colonialism—rebaptized Imperialism in these latter days—became more and more a question of immediate political concern.

At first the terrible disgrace and heavy financial burden of the war with the American Colonies, the petty worries which the

newer states caused us and the risks of war which they often brought upon us, together with the growth of a Liberalism, whose vision was fixed narrowly upon self-government and small nationalities, prepared the leaders of all parties at home to welcome, and even aid, the time when the Colonies would cut themselves adrift from the Mother Country and undertake full responsibility for their own national existence. That was when the nations of Europe, weakened by war, smitten until they broke or were welded in impossible union by Napoleon and the politicians who tried to undo his work, were resting and recovering, or, at a later time, were fighting to get back to a natural condition.

Then came an impulse of foreign acquisition, which in its circumstances and methods repeated with a curious fidelity the expansion movements of the sixteenth century. Cathay was again jealously surveyed by nations whose palms itched to possess it, but finally, Europe, except Russia, swooped upon Africa.

For a time the Chartered Company reappeared, but the Colonial epoch had passed and the Imperial epoch had begun.

## II

### IMPERIALISM

BEFORE the first Parliament elected by the newly enfranchised borough householders in 1868 had half run its course, a change came over the temper of the British electorate. Liberalism was still inspired by the wants and wishes of a cosmopolitan trading class. It had done excellent practical work in political enfranchisement, in national economy, in international peace, but its ideals were somewhat mean and the achievements possible for its practical sagacity were all but consummated. The base money-making Manchester School, devoid of national pride and subordinating everything to trading profits, never existed—but it very nearly did; and when Germany had fought with France the war which sealed its nationhood, nationalism became aggressive in Europe. The Englishman felt stung. Alabama arbitrations

might have been the triumph of justice, but it was of a justice unadorned with glory; cosmopolitanism might be satisfactory to angels, but to Englishmen it seemed to be little more than contentment with being left out in the cold. Mr. Disraeli was quick to feel this changing temper. Liberalism was becoming confused as though a mist had fallen on its vision. It did not understand the craving of the national heart. Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform had ceased to appeal to the imagination of the people. Speaking at the Crystal Palace in 1872, the Conservative leader confessed that he had at one time thought of separation from the Colonies, asked to be pardoned for the sin, and proclaimed his inspiration henceforth to be Imperialism and Social Reform. During the intervening thirty-four years the country has been trying to make definite what was but a vague apprehension of the Crystal Palace speaker.

The democratic movements were not ready to assimilate the changed temper. Mr. Gladstone's mind was singularly unresponsive to the tidal impulses of the national spirit. He followed the inner rather than the outer light, whilst his



great political adversary had no inner illumination to confuse him in pursuing ends which were enticing to the majority. Instead of recognising and using the new tendency, the democratic leaders simply opposed it and they failed. Now, after a war which will never be read by our children with a gleam of pride, after a reckless policy of military extravagance, after revelations of incompetence and dishonesty, these leaders have again got a chance of putting themselves in sympathetic touch with the spirit which has been misled and exploited by the Imperialist movement.

The Imperialist propaganda in England originated in a revulsion of the popular feeling against the feeble policy of Liberalism in international affairs, and has spent its energies in leading that revulsion from being a mere expression of discontent to being an opposition to the free trade, the internationalism, the humanism, upon which must be founded the colonial and world policy of a democratic State.

In no respect more than in the unimaginative and unsympathetic way it approached foreign politics, and more particularly the



politics of native races, has the Imperialist movement, as this generation has known it, been in declared hostility to democracy. Nobody has laid down with more accuracy of feeling the mind of democratic diplomacy and administration than the late Sir M. E. Grant Duff, who in one of his letters to his Elgin constituents wrote : --

“It is required that we should aim at living in the community of nations as well-bred people live in society ; gracefully acknowledging the rights of others, and confident, if we ever think about the matter at all, that others will soon come to do no less for us.”

This has been displaced by the perfervid patriotism of the mailed fist, and in the Imperialist organisation for carrying on Foreign Affairs the statesmen and the diplomatist have been cashiered and the Admiral and General put in their places. I say nothing against an efficient army and navy. I wish to emphasise that the efficiency of these carnal defences cannot be judged by their numerical strength and their massiveness. It can be estimated only in relation to national policy. But the Imperialist cannot see far enough. He can only feel

at peace when his barns are large; he neglects the fields from which the crops have to be raised. He counts his ships and his army corps, and all he wants his statesmen to do is to brag about his strength and tell how fast his rival's sands of fate run down. There are no neighbours in the Imperialist Paradise; there are only allies and enemies—if not *in esse*, *in posse*. Fortunately for the State, Imperialism has not been so successful at the Foreign Office as at the Colonial Office. If Mr. Chamberlain had been at the Foreign Office and Lord Milner been an ambassador at a European Court, the flames of war they managed to kindle in the South African Republics would have been mere camp-fires compared with the conflagration they might have started.

The lack of imagination which must always make Imperialism a danger in Foreign relationships makes it futile in the administration of dependencies. The Native, to the Imperialist, is always a political bondsman and generally a mere tool in white men's hands for the exploitation of his country. We subscribe our money to Missionary Societies and the

Imperialist ascribes a rebellion<sup>1</sup> in Natal to the propaganda of the Christian Ethic regarding human rights.<sup>2</sup> We crush out national initiative and responsibility; we debar the native from a share in managing his own affairs; we establish a law and order which the native does not understand; our breath is too often poison to the peoples we rule; but the Imperialist bursts into song because in the South Sea Islands British peace and British ways are being observed. He has never thought over the truth that is in Bagehot's reflection that "the higher being is not and cannot be a model for the lower; he could not mould himself on it if he would, and would not if he could." In moulds of British thought and British notions of excellence the Imperialist would shape all

<sup>1</sup> There never was a rebellion in reality, but a hunt.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Despatch of Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 1 in Cd. 3247, where the spread of Ethiopianism is put down as one of the most important reasons for the Natal disturbances. But what is Ethiopianism, except the social and political movement which Christian teaching has nurtured in a race neglected and kept subject as were the slaves who first embraced the faith in Rome and whose consequent actions associated Christianity with political revolution?

races—except when any of these races become restive, and then he tells us that unless we punish with the swift brutality of the native civilisation, our hold upon our wards will be loosened and our authority will vanish. In a word, the democratic principle of native administration is to develop native civilisation on its own lines—the educational method; the Imperialist method is to impose upon it an alien civilisation—the political method. As in foreign policy so in native administration, the Imperialist, seeing and seeking only surface results, understands only summary methods. No man believes more firmly that force is a remedy than he who cannot see below the surface of things.

The same Imperialist defect, manifesting itself in trade, has been the cause of some considerable loss of markets. The British manufacturer has been so thoroughly convinced that his interpretation of what are the needs of other peoples is correct that when more imaginative and sympathetic rivals have appeared on his field, his goods have ceased to be asked for. He sticks to his English language, English coinage, English weights and measures in

his catalogues, and to his English notions of what foreigners ought to demand, not because he is careless, but because he is unable to put himself in other people's shoes, to conceive the mind of the Indian, or live in idea the life of the Chinaman.

For his losses, he turns to external causes. He wants a readjustment of Tariff and Preferential trade, and again displays his fatal lack of imagination by his failure to understand the political and industrial mind of the Colonies. He mouths fine-sounding phrases that are sometimes red hot with aggression, sometimes gorgeous with the trappings of racial pride, but he never tries to discover the value of his words in terms of definite business arrangements which the Colonies will accept.

His failure in trade compels him to turn his attention to exploitation, and, all unknowing to himself, he begins to be moved by the same motive which inspired the Spaniard in New Mexico. He demands serf labour. China becomes a recruiting ground for his mines, India and the Islands of the Seas for his sugar-fields and his ships. He is driven to claim an

economic predominance for his race which it is at liberty to assert independently of the ethical considerations affecting the relationship of master and servant in a civilised community. His conscience is not dead, however, and he compels his spiritual leaders to invent for him some such justification as that of a "regrettable necessity" in order that he may serve both God and Mammon—"regrettable" the sop thrown to God, "necessity" the homage paid to Mammon.

Again, this spirit has a direct influence upon the character of a country's business. It creates an impatience with the slow and laborious processes of legitimate trade and encourages the mere financier and the parasite; and the financier is the most dangerous man for implicating us in foreign trouble. His profits are generally made under considerable risk, as when he lends money to Egypt; and he is especially interested in controlling the organs of public opinion in politics. Imperialism, moreover, is exactly the kind of public faith which enables him to claim the protection of national armaments in advancing his personal interests, because Imperialism exaggerates the right



*cf. Don Pacific*

of a citizen to call upon his country for support. High finance and politics cannot be separated. The financier has often more to say in foreign relationships than the Foreign Secretary and all the King's Ministers put together.

On each of these points the Imperialist movement of this generation challenges the democratic purpose.

As regards political methods and ends, its challenge is equally emphatic. To it, the ideal of national self-government is as dusty an antiquity as the Jacobite claim to the throne. Nationality, a precious sense for the Imperialist himself, is regarded by him as a mere obsession when found in other people. His ideal is swollen dominions ruled by a bureaucracy of what he calls "experts," with perhaps subordinate democratic forms in the background. His state is based upon militarism, and the elevation of the soldier above the citizen is inevitable. The natural result of his propaganda could not be better stated than in the words of one of his own writers: "Authority rather than liberty seems for the moment to have the upper hand; power and dominion rather than freedom and

independence are the ideas that appeal to the imagination of the masses; men's thoughts are turned outward rather than inward; the national ideal has given place to the Imperial."<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to dispute these statements, except in so far as they seem to imply that the mood they express is permanent or that "the masses" have found a resting-place on such a political standpoint. But the corollary of the statement is perfectly plain. It is that democracy and Imperialism are incompatible.

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Money Penny, "The Empire and the Century," pp. 5, 6.



### III

## THE CLASSES AND THE EMPIRE

HOWEVER we may desire nowadays to describe the Empire as our "white man's burden," or however enraptured may be our hymns regarding its Heaven-ordained destiny, its origin was no more Divine than our greed for gain. The Empire was not a political but a commercial venture. The Colonial settlements were at first factories in the profits of which the Crown and trading companies shared; or they were exploiting outposts of white men where the labour of natives was used to throw glittering riches upon the lap of European powers; or they were depôts or plantations for the distribution of European goods and the supply of articles of European consumption. To this day that epoch of Colonial policy survives in cases like the South African Chartered Company, and, though not nominally so, the Congo Free State. Both

of these administrations are frankly capitalistic. They exist for the purpose of exploitation, with the native as an instrument; they employ the language of patriotism and appeal to the spirit of nationality only to enable them to increase their dividends and divert the attention of the public from their operations. Just as Lord Chesterfield tells us that the Indian Nabob of his day put up the price of constituencies, so the successful Colonial exploiters of modern times have, both in England and Belgium, suborned the Press, flouted the Corrupt Practices Law, and degraded the tone of both our public and private life.

Even the colony which was to be a permanent settlement of people who were to spread over the land, was an appendage to capitalism. Its markets were kept open for home products by the sovereign decrees of the Home Government; its trade was a monopoly of the home country—in short, it was commercially even more than politically a “possession.” No consideration of political or national glory induced the capitalists to view the Empire with favour

when it ceased to yield them profits. Then they talked about cutting the Colonies adrift.

The greater part of the energy of the Imperialists of to-day, if they express themselves accurately in their speeches, springs from a hope that the Colonies may improve as a market for British goods, and they worship the flag not as a historical and spiritual symbol but as a trading asset. Practically the whole of the band of gentlemen who by subscription and voice are keeping the Tariff Reform League in existence are personally interested in the higher rents and the increased profits which an effective system of Imperial Preference, involving Protection in Great Britain, would bring them. They are mainly concerned with securing economic advantages for their class. They support the Empire for business reasons.

They also monopolise the Imperial offices. The more territory we annex the larger is the income of our governing classes. The army and navy have always been associated with dominions over the sea, and these forces have been the preserves of the

well-to-do. In no part of the State has Social influence been more powerful than in the things pertaining to war. The way in which officers are appointed, the methods of training them, the social traditions of army life, the pay and the expenses, the class caste of the officer fraternity, make army commands an appendage not only of Society but of the inner rings of Society. What would become of all these younger sons and possible heirs and rich youths if our Empire did not require an army or if our army was democratised?

It is the same with the higher grades of the Civil Service. Gradually these offices drift further and further away from the democracy. The entrance examinations are designed more and more to secure for a few Oxford Colleges and institutions of the same kind a monopoly of these appointments. These sons of the well-to-do are honest as a whole, and painstaking as a rule. They are the finest race in the world for keeping in old ruts, and that of itself is some qualification for the offices they hold. But they are also the least imaginative and sympathetic of men. Nine-tenths of

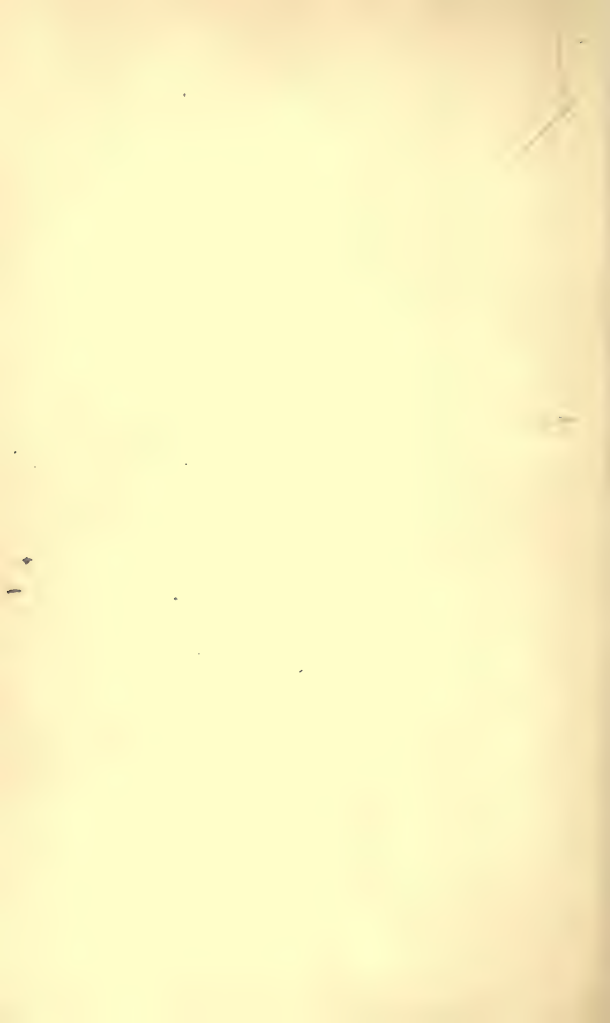
them return from their foreign appointments without having understood the mind of the natives they were ruling. One meets them in the Islands of the Seas, pining for home, surrounded by English influences. One asks them about native religion—that's not their subject ; about native customs—that's not their subject ; about native problems—that's not their subject. They come of a different race, they remain of a different race. Their work is mechanical. The failure of our Empire except to produce mechanical results, such as keeping warring tribes at peace, is largely owing to the fact that the Empire is governed by the most narrow-visioned of our social classes. National pride may be a valuable possession, but when it becomes a consciousness of racial superiority it ceases to be an Imperial virtue.

Thus, it is not only in its origin but also in its present administration that the Empire in a special sense is a perquisite of the rich classes, and the influence of the Labour Party on Imperial politics must be to democratise the personnel of the Imperial machine. A Trade Union secretary could

govern a province *primâ facie* better than the son of an ancient county family or some one who was a friend of the Colonial Secretary when he was passing time at Balliol. We honestly think that the Colonies appreciate our aristocracy, but the Colonies laugh at our amiable illusions.

II

THE EMPIRE AND LABOUR  
POLICY





# I

## THE EMPIRE

THE British flag flies over 11,400,000 square miles and 410,000,000 people. One-fifth of the earth and one-fifth of its folk are ours. But prodigious as these figures are, they minimise rather than exaggerate the wonderful nature of our dominions. Every race, creed, colour, civilisation, obey our rule ; and it is only when one has seen the endless variety of humanity and clime that lies beneath our flag that one has a glimmering of what the British Empire means.

Greater Britain introduces itself to the wanderer westwards by a French province, loyal because it is not asked to abandon its religion, or its language, or its nationality. He passes into provinces which differ little from the United States, and further westwards again he discovers a deeper imprint of British characteristics. On the Pacific

his fellow-subjects are the easy-going children of nature, some of them only a generation removed from cannibalism, and as he pursues his way westwards, he falls in with the newest Britain, differing less from the old in its ways and appearance than the nearer Dominion of Canada. Across the Indian Ocean to the west lie the unhappy lands of South Africa, where race eyes race with suspicion and where the native problem poisons the wells of politics. To the north live the swarms of India—nations within a nation, races within a state, and as he touches at the various little points where the Empire keeps a foothold, every new day reveals a new type of race, a new phase of civilisation, a new stage in the evolution of peoples. So wonderful does it become that light-hearted Pride ceases to be the welcomed companion of the soul; the soul needs to commune with doubt, so impossible seems the task of guarding worthily the vast and complicated inheritance we have received from the past.

And yet, when one surveys the panorama as a whole it seems to assume the order of unity in its vast range from the political slavery of some of the dominions to the

self-government of some of the States. First there are the self-governing nations, like Canada and Australia, colonised mainly by our children; then there are the dependencies and Crown colonies, like India and Jamaica, chiefly inheritances from the days of the trading companies, and now—theoretically at any rate—cared for by us 'so that they may enjoy the blessings of the matured civilisation of the West, and that we, through our responsibility to them, may feel that we are benefiting the world. Egypt, in reality, holds the same status. Finally, there are the strategic points of defence and the coaling stations, which serve as links to join up the whole and enable it to maintain a unity of existence against the rest of the world.

What is to be the future of this organisation? Is it to melt as Empires have melted away before? Is it to be a confusion to our civilisation? Is it to be a stumbling-block in the way of our democratic ideals? Does it demand that we should put on the yoke of authority and abandon the delights of liberty? Can it become a coherent unity distributing to each of its parts their proper share in sustaining their common life? Are

the daughters to cease cherishing her who bore them? The man who has seen the wonderful panorama of Greater Britain, and leaves it behind him without feeling the oppression of these and similar questions, is not to be envied.

## II

### THE SELF-GOVERNING STATES

EMPIRE and Imperialism are expressions which must be obnoxious to any democratic party, because they imply a conception of national destiny and a method of government distasteful to the democratic spirit. But time itself has destroyed some of the features of Imperial colonialism which democracy could not accept. What once were subject dominions have developed into self-governing States, and I propose to discuss in this chapter the Imperial problem which these States present.

Must self-government end in independence? Can there be a British Empire of self-governing States? Whether there can be or not will depend not only on whether such an Empire is politically possible, but also on whether it is politically desirable.

Its advantages are obvious. From the beginning of democratic parties men have

dreamed of federations of peoples to secure peace. "The Parliament of man, the federation of the world" has become threadbare by constant use on democratic platforms; and no party to-day stands more committed to anti-militarism and peace than the Labour and Socialist Parties of the world.

If it be said that the existence of our Empire necessitates the maintenance of a large army and navy, its break up, it must be remembered, would not diminish the world's sum-total of armies and navies but would rather increase it. The burden which would be shifted from our backs would be imposed upon others, and I think we are entitled to claim that an armed Britain is as unlikely to disturb the peace of the world as any other military Power.

Nor should we necessarily regard the armaments required for the security of the Empire as nourishment for the spirit of militarism. It is not armaments that produce militarism but the political spirit behind the armaments. Moreover, a nation which divides its territory will not in consequence divide, but may multiply, its armaments.

On the other hand, any alterations in the *status quo* would but rouse the jealousies of the other nations—as when Africa was being partitioned; and if the self-governing colonies became independent States, the number of possibly militant governments and points of friction would be increased, whilst the gravity of a serious war as it presents itself to statesmen responsible for an enormous territory would be diminished.

There may be some counterbalancing considerations. It might be argued, for instance, with some truth that a great power at a crisis is a bullying power, or is too tempted to base its diplomacy on its arms, but, on the whole, a very substantial balance remains in favour of the view that the British Empire under democratic custodianship can be a powerful element in the maintenance of peace and the promotion of the international spirit. So we had better accept the Empire as it is, and look to international agreement as the only way of substantially reducing armaments and thus giving the national fevers of militarism a chance of subsiding.

The greatest difficulty in our relations with our self-governing colonies which I, as



a member of the Labour Party, can foresee, is whether it is possible for the States in the Empire each to develop true to British traditions and towards ends sufficiently similar to prevent irritating interference from within. Is there to be an Imperial tradition and destiny, or is there only to be a State tradition and destiny?

During the debate on the Colonial Office vote on the 14th March 1906, Mr. Chamberlain said, with reference to the threatened veto by the Home Government of a possible Chinese Labour Ordinance passed by a Transvaal Legislature, that the Colonies would not tolerate any such Imperial action, and he supported them in their opposition.<sup>1</sup> Seven days later, Mr. Balfour repeated the same doctrine, only with more definiteness, and employed words which made Mr. Chamberlain's position clearer than he had made it himself. If, he argued, any one Colony insisted upon enslaving its hewers of wood and drawers of water, it would have a perfect right to do so and to request either Great Britain or the other Colonies, if they interfered, to mind their own business,

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, vol. cliii. pp. 1292-1298.



as it was only exercising its right of self-government.

In the bald honesty of these statements we behold so-called Imperialist leaders elevating some local economic necessity—or supposed necessity—for slavery in mines or sugar-fields, above the most precious of our Imperial traditions. The “Imperial thinking” of the Imperialists is still apparently prepared to accept the doctrine that there can be membership in the Empire without responsibility to the Imperial life. This can best be described as Professor Seeley described the old colonial system: “An irrational jumble of two opposite conceptions.”

What these Imperialists contemplate is a group of independent States, each one irresponsible for the policy and actions of the rest. But this is a negation of the idea of any unity more vital than diplomatic and mechanical alliance, whereas Empire presupposes a common racial policy, or a uniform political purpose either imposed by authority or agreed to by the allied States. The Imperialist has not thought about his Empire. He has not got beyond the stage of wanting an Empire—that is his principle,

and of trusting the man on the spot—that is his method; and he has not yet discovered that his method is miserably inadequate in view of the nature of his aspirations. He has only reached that primitive stage of thought in which whatever action his tribe or tribesmen take is accepted as right irrespective of any standard of qualitative worth, and in which the bigger his tribe the more important does he appear to himself to be. He has no sense of a “British” tradition, or a “British” genius, or a “British” policy. He claims that circumstances alter national and racial methods (which is true), but from that deducts the corollary, so destructive to every Imperial idea, that practically no attempt should be made by an Imperial authority to maintain traditional and racial standards in the administration of the several colonies. He is concerned with men not with policies. If a Boer lashes a black, or shoots him, the Imperialist of the primitive habits of thought sharpens his swords and bayonets to subdue the Boer; if a British Colonist does the same, the person who prides himself on thinking Imperially is perfectly certain that nothing else ought to have been

done because "the British man on the spot" did it.

"The man on the spot" conception of Imperial responsibility is a negation of the Imperial idea. It leads to anarchy and chaos. No wonder that such Imperialists, having in reality (however strongly they may protest to the contrary) abandoned faith in the spiritual and political bond of Empire, seek to cement it by trading profits.

But we must not allow them to assume that their "man on the spot" shibboleth gets them out of any difficulty. What "man on the spot"? Sir William Butler was as much on the spot in South Africa as Lord Milner before the war, and, as events turned out, the General displayed far more insight and foresight than the Governor. But Sir William Butler was in the minority, and according to the new Imperialism nobody is "on the spot" unless he belongs to a majority.

Here one discovers another important difference between the methods of the Imperialist of to-day and the policy of the Labour Party. The latter does not in any way discount the knowledge of

"the man on the spot," but it does not forget that there are always "two men on the spot," and its task is to discriminate between the true and the false voice. It must apply a test. The test of race which the Imperialist hurriedly applies at the first sign of opposition is only an appeal to ignorance and prejudice, because both the men on the spot are British—Sir William Butler, indeed, having a somewhat better British ancestry than Lord Milner. Nor is the test of the majority in many instances sound; because in so many of these Imperial problems the interest of the white settlers in committing the Empire to a foolhardy or unjust series of actions is so perfectly obvious that local majorities are untrustworthy guides when the whole Empire is concerned. Therefore, what the majority test of the Imperialists amounts to is a claim that a local majority may commit the whole Empire to a course of action.

The fact is, as the Labour Party would insist, that the whole of the Empire cannot help being made responsible for the acts of its States. If Natal condemns its natives to death by drumhead courts which every

one knows are absolutely incapable of appreciating evidence or arriving at a judicial decision, and if the Home Premier condones the conduct of Imperial officers who played a leading part in these disgraceful episodes, it is sheer hypocrisy on the part of our Foreign Secretary to threaten the Congo Government for allowing the murder of natives in the rubber forests. If these acts which a majority in a State initiate are to be credited to the Empire and not merely to the citizens of the State concerned, some attempt must be made to devise Imperial principles of State conduct.

That this is essential is admitted at once when we consider the financial aspects of Imperial responsibility. The financial and monied interests which are predominant in the Imperial propaganda of to-day, would be shocked beyond expression if Natal were to go bankrupt and repudiate its debts; and they would instantly clamour for some action being taken to relieve the Empire of the odium of a fraudulent State. But it is just as important that we should keep unsullied the judicial and administrative good name of the Empire as that its financial probity should remain intact.

Another aspect of my contention will also be readily granted in a partial way. I argue that no State within the Empire has the right to adopt a policy of administration or a standard of civil liberty contrary to, or lower than, the traditional policy and standard of the Empire itself, and I base my argument mainly upon the consideration that if any such departure is allowed, it involves the whole Empire. State action becomes as a matter of fact Imperial action and the Empire has to take the consequences.

That this is really so is appreciated at once when the State action becomes a *casus belli*. None of the most aggressive advocates of State rights would seriously contend that a self-governing Colony has the right to plunge the Empire in war without the consent of the Imperial authorities. But with a quickened sense of democratic honour and an appreciation of the spiritual inheritance of race and Empire, it surely is as important to preserve our Imperial standards of equity and civil liberty from what may be the degrading effects of a Colony's policy, as it is to protect the Imperial forces from being



embroiled in war by the Cabinet of a self-governing Imperial State.

I do not for a moment disguise from myself the fact that the people of the self-governing States hold such a doctrine as this in great suspicion. Under the old conditions of Imperial rule when means of communication were so defective and distance meant so much, when there was so little going and coming between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and when our Imperial statesmen regarded colonies as the property of the Home Land, the yoke of Imperial interference was heavy and irritating, and those days are only remembered by convict ships, trading edicts, and governor's orders which threatened to scatter across the pages of our history many episodes like those of Bunker Hill and Saratoga. But those times have changed, and if we return to conceptions of a united people, coherent, organically connected, following a common destiny, pursuing the same world policy, we do so in a totally different frame of mind from that which animated the George III.s and the Norths.

The unity which we seek cannot be

imposed. It must be an expression of a desire already existing, just as restrictive legislation to be successful must not be a yoke but the measure of further liberty. It must come from within, not from without. That, we now assume. Our daughter States need not trouble to argue with us upon that point. Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, have as much right to an independent existence and development as has Great Britain. If they remain within the Empire it is of their own free will and for reasons which appeal to themselves; if they accept Imperial standards and recognise the responsibilities, as well as claim the privileges, of State-hood within the British hegemony, again, it is to be of their own free will. When our people over the seas accept these assurances the preliminary difficulties to Imperial thinking will be overcome.

No party has more opportunity for allaying the natural suspicion of the Colonies in this respect than the Labour Party. The political organisations of Labour and Socialism all the world over are in the closest relations with each other. In spite of many differences in their State policies,



which have arisen owing to geographical and industrial differences, in spirit the Labour Parties within the Empire are the same and their representatives are received with fraternal greeting by all the other Labour Parties. The significance of the fact that in every state of Australia the Labour Party is either in office or is the regular Opposition, and that the Party is rapidly widening its horizon and is becoming conscious of the part which Labour Parties have to play in the world's politics, has been altogether lost sight of by those who still think as Mr. Chamberlain seems to do, that the last word which our Imperial States will have to say upon this Imperial relationship is: "If you interfere when we think you are wrong, it is intolerable; but it is not less intolerable when we think you are right."<sup>1</sup> To us of the Labour Party this language and thought are both antiquated. They describe a position which does not exist in our minds. The accusation of interference does not apply to us. We think of common agreement. The Imperial

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, vol. cliii. p. 1296.

standard is not to be laid down by Downing Street, but by the self-governing States taking on their shoulders their Imperial burden. It is not the "you"—the Mother Land—who are to interfere; it is the "we"—the Confederation of the Empire—who are to decide. But at the present moment there is not sufficient identity of interest between political organisations at home and in the Colonies, other than those of the Labour Parties, to provide the conditions from which the new confidence is to spring up. A friendly co-operation between the Labour Parties in the Empire seems to me, not to be all that is required, but an essential first step to a genuine Imperial unity.

But we must pursue the matter a further stage. What is the nature and scope of the Imperial standard to which I have been referring? And what is to be the form of the authority which is to give it effect? An attempt to answer these questions will bring us right to the heart of the practical problems of Imperial organisation.

### III

## THE IMPERIAL STANDARD

WHEN the expression "British" is used in civil matters it implies something more than a mere description of racial or national origin. "British" justice, "British" honour, "British" administration, carry to our minds certain qualities of justice, honour, and administration, and our Imperial policy has always been commended to our people at home—whenever they troubled their heads about it—on these moral or qualitative grounds. The Empire must exist not merely for safety, or order, or peace, but for richness of life. Now the task of the democratic parties of the Empire is to establish guarantees that this moral quality will be preserved untainted. If in this attempt any of the essential rights of a self-governing State have to be withdrawn from the Colonies, we need not waste time and energy in carrying on the attempt.

We are foredoomed to failure. Not a single Colony would submit to such a thing. It would rather cut its Imperial bond.

But no right essential to self-government is threatened by the establishment of Imperial standards and the safeguarding of Imperial traditions.

For these Imperial standards and traditions are, in the main, certain axioms regarding human liberty and the administration of justice. That no man can be a slave under the British flag; that the administration of justice shall not be prejudiced or tainted, and that every accused person shall have a fair trial conducted by certain clearly defined processes; that law shall ultimately rest upon the consent of the citizens, may in summary be laid down as the inheritance which past experience has taught the present generation of Britons to cherish. To these may be added what is a frequently asserted claim, if it is far from being always adopted in practice, that British policy is inspired by Burke's dictum: "The principles of true politics are those of morality enlarged."

If these principles were embodied in

a theoretical statement like the American Declaration of Independence, few people under the British flag would refuse to give them assent. But it is perfectly evident, from numerous instances in the history of our Empire and of America, that it is one thing to assent to general propositions, but a totally different thing to apply them faithfully.

The plea of circumstance has frequently been urged to justify these "British" axioms being regarded as geographical in their application. "The ten commandments do not run east of Suez." There are what are called "instinctive" repulsions between black, white, and yellow; there are oppositions between races—the French and British in Canada, the Dutch and British in South Africa; there are differences in civilisations which affect the morality of the relationships between them—the Belgian officer has to kill the wife of the Congolese in order to give the Congolese to understand that the white man will stand no nonsense from lazy niggers—the Natal militia officer must shoot a few natives to show the rest that little Natal is also determined to stand no nonsense—the citizens of the United

States must murder niggers to keep the survivors in their proper place—and Belgian officers, Natal grocers, and American citizens inform us that we know nothing about it because we are not living under their conditions. They are the “men on the spot.”

Undoubtedly these troublesome problems which arise when races and colours come into conflict have been one of the most prolific sources of friction within the Empire, and have contributed pages to our Imperial history which we read with but little pleasure now. None of our Colonies are quite free from the taint. The history of the Indians in North America, of the various tribes in Australia, of the Maoris in New Zealand, of the native races in South Africa, is too often a sorry comment on the white man's civilisation, and it presents to the Imperialist writer a multitude of awkward episodes which do not fit in with his panegyrics on how we have borne our burden of responsibility for our native brethren.

I recall these darker episodes of our Colonial history only to remind my readers of the great difficulties which lie in the way of any statesman who attempts to deal with this question of native treatment in a way

satisfactory to any Imperial ideal. I certainly do not recall them in order to censure the Colonies, for the Home authorities have known their own minds so imperfectly that one of the sources of native trouble has been the changes in native policy pursued by Downing Street.

Regarding the future only there is not likely to be any Imperial friction owing to the native policy of self-governing States except in South Africa.

The Red Indian is but a remnant, weakened in great part by consumption, drink, and civilisation, hanging about street corners in the middle and west of Canada, a fawning and a dirty beggar. The Australian native is gone.<sup>1</sup> The Maori is no outcast native. He can marry whites, and his blood carries no taint with it, and he is enfranchised. There may be trouble about his land, and the treaty of Waitango and subsequent native land legislation, which have secured him in his possessions, may be felt as a burden by the rest

<sup>1</sup> Charges like those preferred by Dr. Klaatsch against the treatment of natives in the Australian North-West call for some active steps being taken by the Government of Western Australia.



of the people, but when this trouble arises it will be just the same as the community has had with the rich squatter since land monopoly became a pressing problem to the expanding State.

In all these States the native problem has settled itself by exhaustion—except in New Zealand. It is not so in South Africa, where it will be a menace to Imperial harmony for some time to come, because the propinquity of different races and civilisations in South Africa is to remain, and is to be an element in Imperial policy.

At first we are tempted to let South Africa deal with the native question as though it were a purely local matter. We think of the 1,100,000 whites swallowed up in the sea of 5,000,000 blacks, and when our kin tell us that their wives and children live at the mercy of the offspring of the men who trod upon the bloody footsteps of Dingaan, we feel as though we should not criticise even when we know that they suffer more from panic than from danger, and that their own neglect or ill-treatment of the native is responsible for what native discontent there may be. And yet, such an attitude is shirking our Imperial



responsibilities. We cannot tolerate such a policy of irrational drift. The Empire has a name, the Imperial people have responsibilities. We have prided ourselves on the quality of our civilisation, and if we rule natives by the same display of brutal force as natives themselves use, we abandon every claim we can make to superiority. A bush raid by a colonel of Natal militia, in which natives are shot at sight and every kraal burned, shows but a slight difference in civilisation from some of those raids which the Zulus made upon their enemies when they turned Natal into a desert, and for which we now profess to detest them.

In South Africa, however, there is a second "man on the spot" whose experience with the natives indicates the character of an honourable Imperial policy. The querulous pleas that you cannot trust the native till you have flogged him; that he is constantly thinking of some rising or other, and that you must therefore shoot him occasionally; that you must not allow him to express opinions about your rule because criticism on his part cannot be differentiated from treason, only require to be tested in order to be exposed. They

are the doctrines of the domineering Imperialist who comes not to educate and develop but to rule and exploit.

But what is of much more importance on this point than the testimony of individuals like Bishop Colenso is the experience of Cape Colony. There is no colour-line in the Cape franchise, and though the property qualifications and the provisions that prevent men living in tribes from voting may keep so many natives off the register that their vote is a very small fraction of their adult population, they have considerable influence in elections and some constituencies are known as native constituencies.<sup>1</sup> The result has been highly satisfactory both to the native and the Colony.

Before 1854, when the first Cape Parliament was established, the coloured man

<sup>1</sup> The Cape franchise is granted to males of 21 years of age who can write their name, address, and occupation, and who own a house, or land, or both, of the capital value of £75, or who have an annual wage of £50. Land under tribal tenure does not count, and the tribal native is excluded. In 1903 there was a total of 135,168 voters in the Cape, and of those 9343 were natives proper and 10,162 coloured men. It has been computed that the native vote is the deciding quantity in seven constituencies returning two members each, and in several others it is of the greatest importance to candidates.

had enjoyed a municipal franchise in Cape Town, and so well had he used it that there was no room for doubting his right to a Parliamentary vote. Liberal ideas were in the ascendant and he was enfranchised.

Previous to 1854 the natives were under the direct charge of the Colonial Office and the result was most unsatisfactory, and is to be seen in native troubles and friction with the Colony. Since then harmony between black and white has been the rule; the natives have prospered, and the whites in the Cape have more respect for them than is the case in any other African community. The taxes they bear are fair; their interests are looked after by Parliament, and they have sent as their representatives such admirable men as Sir Richard Solomon, Sir James Rose Innes, and Mr. Sauer. The experience of New Zealand with the Maoris repeats practically the same lesson.

The evidence that the methods of civilisation and that Imperial standards of justice can be applied to native policy in South Africa is overwhelming. The ten commandments can be applied east of Suez, and though it is easier for some of the men on

the spot to disregard rather than regard them—provided they are allowed to use force when they have created rebellions—it is clearly the duty of the Imperial authorities to insist that the self-governing States shall adopt a native policy consistent with the honour of the Empire. In other words, the plea that the circumstances of a Colony in which the European population is only as 1 to 10 of the native justify a suspension of the ordinary methods of justice and the ordinary notions regarding humanity, cannot be entertained for an instant. It is possible that a mistake was made in allowing such a community to become anything more than a Crown Colony, or in giving it separate existence and not merging it in its neighbouring State; but be the mistake what it may, the Colony's claim that it has a right to disregard Imperial justice must be emphatically denied.

A Federation of the South African States would ease the situation, because we may assume that Cape Colony will not allow its native policy to be upset if it has its way, and a federation of South Africa would contain a white population of over 1,100,000, of whom about 600,000 would be in Cape

Colony. We may also assume that the larger the area of a State and the larger its white population the more civilised will its native policy be.

To extend the Cape system throughout British South Africa would no doubt meet with much opposition; the racial prejudices and the parochialism of the Natal majority would oppose it, so would the Rhodesians, and so would a majority of the Dutch in the new Colonies. Nevertheless the Imperial authorities ought to make a point of persuading the Federation that this is its best policy, and should not hesitate, if need be, to retain in a very definite and effective way sovereignty over all native affairs unless the franchise is granted. This expedient is not at all desirable, as it is far better that the self-governing States should accept responsibility for carrying out an Imperial native policy, should boldly face the possible drawbacks of such a policy, should win the confidence of the Empire in their attempts, and then claim generous judgment and effective protection (neither of which would be withheld) if they failed.

Whilst South Africa is being swerved on to the right lines of native policy it will

be advisable to impress upon it that those lines are being imposed upon it, not by Downing Street—I suppose that the South African of the domineering School will say “Exeter Hall”—but by the Empire. Consequently native policy should be one of the most important topics for discussion at each Colonial Conference. The trouble hitherto has been that whilst Downing Street has been seeking to apply principles of administration under the guidance of certain human sentiments, “the man on the spot,” moved by his parish needs, has been claiming certain impossible privileges. The one has been unable to see the trees for the wood; the other has been unable to see the wood for the trees. The true principles of the one and the detailed experience of the other, instead of being co-operating factors in the creation of an Imperial policy, have only been opposing councils leading to Imperial friction.

The Colonial Conference affords the opportunity for making peace between Downing Street Imperialism and Colonial parochialism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The recent Natal rebellion (so called) of natives will probably have little effect on our Imperial history, but I



Somewhat akin to the native question is that of the immigration of other than white races into our self-governing Colonies. At the present moment Canada prohibits the immigration of Chinese possessed of less than \$500. In reality that amounts to simple prohibition, and the more straightforward course is not taken because the Mother Country is prevented by treaties from sanctioning a prohibition statute. Australasia is pursuing the same policy as Canada. By a federal law passed in 1901 a language test was imposed upon immigrants, and it is quite clear that the purpose of the enactment is prohibition and not restriction.

feel sure that patriotic historians who wade through the details of the transaction will regret that Natal was not taught by Canada, Australia, and New Zealand that they, as well as the Labour and Radical Parties at home, insisted upon the Union Jack being kept as clean as possible. Australia alone took action which can be called objectionable. That was not owing to any defect in Australian policy but to the unfortunate circumstances of Australian politics. When the smallest party in a State happens to be in office—as was the case in Australia when the Natal trouble arose—it is always on the watch for an opportunity to ingratiate itself with the electors. A weak government gets into a fury, whilst a strong one is still calmly considering what it ought to do.

The motives of both these States are the same. The Labour organisations desire to keep up a high standard for white workpeople, and find that the Chinese and Japanese, carrying their eastern standards of decency and consumption with them, work for wages upon which a white man could not subsist. The Chinese and Japanese emigrant is, therefore, to the Trade Unions of Canada and Australasia just what the Russian Jew is to the Stepney workman.

But above and beyond labour interests there is a racial question. The cry for a white Australia is an expression of the repulsion felt by practically every white man and woman in the country against the mixing of the white and the yellow races. We at home cannot understand the intensity of this feeling. If we could, we should never have allowed, for instance, the mine-owners to import Chinamen to South Africa. That one act did more to destroy Imperial affection and pride in Colonies where the colour repulsion is felt, than anything that has happened for many years. Should ever we find ourselves at war with Japan one is justified in hazarding



a guess that it will be Australia that has dragged us into it owing to her immigration laws or her determination not to treat the yellow man on an equality with the white.

How far do these laws run counter to our Imperial standard? British liberty has always involved asylum for the oppressed and for political and religious refugees, but it has never laid down the doctrine that free immigration was essential. If an Imperial State desires to protect its racial purity, or to maintain its standard of living, it has the right not only to refuse to allow other races to settle on its territory, but it may even decline to accept the paupers of the Mother Country, or of other Imperial States. The power to exclude undesirable immigrants, to classify whole races amongst these undesirables, and to control in other ways the conditions of immigration, may be exercised by the self-governing States without in any way violating those Imperial traditions which as democrats we desire to preserve.

The ill-usage of these undesirables within the State, or their differential treatment as wage-earners, does, however, violate the

spirit of British justice and ought not to be tolerated. The States can exclude Chinamen if they like, but if they admit them, they must not hold them as slaves.

Hence, the immigration policy of Canada and Australasia, so far as it has been developed as yet, concerns these States alone.

The question arises, however, supposing that the Imperial authorities in the general interests of the Empire have made treaties with those penalised races to which this immigration legislation runs counter. What then? The reply is that the difficulty that then arises is not one of fundamental principle, but of the machinery of Imperial government. The Imperial States should be consulted in all treaties that are likely to affect their liberty of action—not only the State that is most evidently to be affected, but all the States as an Imperial unity. Until our method of Imperial government can be adjusted so as to secure this consultation, the Colonies will be patriotic and generous enough to accept conditions which may be irritating, but for which no one—certainly not the reigning powers at Downing Street—is responsible.

Until the old machinery is replaced by the new, awkward situations must arise.

In one respect the Australian immigration policy is an Imperial and a world-wide concern. If the northern parts of the continent cannot be adequately cultivated by white men, and their natural possibilities have to lie latent in consequence, the same economic reason that justifies us in assuming control in the tropics would justify other nations objecting to the Australian policy. This is, however, very remote, and meanwhile Australia is doing its best to prove that the white man can cultivate its northern territories, and the bounty it is paying upon sugar grown by white labour is an earnest of its determination not to allow the "white Australia" policy to result in an empty Australia.

Before passing from this aspect of our subject it must be noted that this Imperial right of imposing an Imperial policy upon the Imperial States affects the Mother Country quite as much as it does Canada, Australia, or South Africa. When, for instance, our "Imperialists" cried out in wrath because the Canadian and Australian

Parliaments passed resolutions in favour of Home Rule, they once more showed their inability to "think Imperially." If the case of the Irish Home Ruler is proved—and Canada and Australia are as able to judge that as we are at home—then our present government of Ireland is not in keeping with our British traditions that government should be carried on only with the assent of the governed, and these States—or, better still, an Imperial Conference—has an indisputable right to advise our Houses of Parliament on the subject of Home Rule.

Australasia might even go further. The enfranchisement of women has become such an integral part of Australasian civilisation and is regarded by the vast majority of Australians as such an essential condition of "British" liberty, that the Commonwealth Parliament and the New Zealand Houses would be well within their rights in passing resolutions declaring that the women of their Mother Land ought to be enfranchised. Whether they would be wise in doing so is another matter, but if they did, no Imperialist could reasonably object.

An examination of what is involved in

applying Imperial standards of right to the legislation and administration of the Imperial States therefore shows, that saving in one or two instances no interference with State authority could take place, and that where interference apparently did take place, it would only be an imposition of the racial and national standards of the stock to which that State belonged.

The treatment of coloured and native races mixed with or living side by side with white people is practically the only serious difficulty that presents itself. For the rest the Imperial standard would be a guidance and control for future policy, and a guarantee to other nations. It would express the spirit of the Empire.

The real difficulty lies in securing the confidence of the Imperial States for whatever authority is to be custodian of the Imperial standard. If these States only felt that they were part and parcel of the deciding authority, that their will was one of the deciding elements and that the decision come to contained in a just proportion their special wants and wishes blended with those of the greater

Imperial unity to which they belonged, they would loyally and faithfully accept Imperial standards. They have lost confidence in Downing Street. Downing Street has advised them wrongly. Downing Street has shilly-shallied. Downing Street is ignorant of Colonial opinion and needs. Above all, Downing Street is the surviving symbol of the era of the British "dominions" and the real "Colonies." The Imperial States will not repose confidence in Downing Street, therefore Downing Street cannot remain the custodian of Imperial standards.

What is to take its place?

## IV

### THE IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

THE Imperial States are so jealous and suspicious of any authority, except what is internal to themselves, that the difficulties in the way of creating any Imperial authority are enormous. The Crown is nominally such an authority; but the Crown for all practical purposes is Downing Street, and is confined in its influence by the limits of the respect paid to, or the confidence reposed in, Downing Street. This respect and confidence are declining. Therefore, no extension of the authority of the Crown will be acceptable to the Colonies. It is becoming more and more nominal and sentimental. It is already stripped of all political significance except in so far as the sentimental homage paid to it can operate alongside the most pronounced determination on the part of the Colonies to mind their own business. The



Crown cannot be the custodian of an Imperial policy though it may be an Imperial link—and even in this respect its influence is greatly exaggerated at home.

Two proposals which have taken for granted the self-government of the Colonies have been made for the creation of an Imperial authority. The first and earliest was Imperial Federation. This would have created a body which was not only responsible but representative. The second was an Imperial Council which might be representative, but which would not be responsible.

The Imperial Federation proposal involves the election of Colonial representatives to the Imperial Parliament, or something practically amounting to that, but it has not stood the test of time. Men living in London, in touch with London Society and steeped in London influences, even though they are Colonials, and have been sent home to represent the Colonies, as Agents-General now are, could not keep in sufficiently close touch with their constituencies. The authority on which these representatives would sit would be regarded by the Colonies as alien to them, and it could not command and retain their confidence. A



Parliament containing Colonial representatives would carry no more Imperial weight than the present Parliament does. On the other hand circumstances would drive the Colonial representatives into our domestic party politics, and Imperial questions, which ought to be guarded as much as possible from domestic party strife, would be thrust into the turmoil of partisanship. Imperial Federation may safely be dismissed as the first, and therefore unsatisfactory, attempt to create an Imperial organisation for expressing Imperial standards of government.

The next proposal was to establish an Imperial Council. This has taken several forms—an Imperial Committee of the Privy Council which would include Colonial Privy Councillors, a Cabinet enlarged by Colonial representatives summoned to discuss Imperial questions, a kind of Advisory Committee charged with placing what may be called the raw material for a Government policy before the Cabinet.

Although these proposals show a greater maturity of consideration and a fuller appreciation of the Colonial mind than Imperial Federation did, and although they are not open to some of the objections that can be

taken to the first scheme, they are improvements only because they have avoided the difficulties of representation by destroying responsibility. But the difficulties of joining representation and responsibility have to be overcome and not set on one side because the authority of a non-responsible Council, however distinguished its members are, must be exceedingly limited amongst democratically governed States.

Moreover, the Colonial members of any one of these bodies would have to live in London during the term of their appointment, and that would so diminish what authority they had in the Colonies as to defeat the purposes of the Council.

The authority which I have in mind must observe certain conditions. It must be representative; it must not lose touch with the Imperial States, and, therefore, its members must not live in London; and, it may be added, each Imperial State should have an equal representation.<sup>1</sup>

Can such a body be created? It seems

<sup>1</sup> The difficulty presented by non-federated States, like Newfoundland, or the South African States, and the question whether the States within a federation, like the Australian States, should be separately represented, would have to be settled by agreement.

to me to be perfectly simple. The Colonies will not give confidence to a body permanently sitting in London or in any one city, but this difficulty is overcome if it be agreed that the body should not sit continuously, but be summoned at intervals. A further consideration in favour of this plan is that it would ensure that the members of the body would speak from fresh experience of Colonial opinion and be under no delusion as to its aims and temper.

It would be quite impossible to elect by a Colonial franchise the members of this body, but the advantages of election, joined with those of representation, could be secured if the body were composed of the Premiers and Leaders of the Opposition for the time being and any other State officials determined upon. Thus the decisions of the body would be supported in the Colonies and the very best guidance given to the authority, as to what limits it should place upon its deliberations and resolutions. In no other way can a body be created which will have authority in the Colonies. It must be primarily a Council of Premiers whose function would then be to represent their States on this Imperial Conference just as much as to lead

the Governments over which they preside. What is wanted, therefore, is not Imperial Federation and not an Imperial Council, but an Imperial Conference meeting with sufficient frequency and deliberating with sufficient care upon Imperial concerns.

It has been said that a Conference like this would create no permanent organisation, would have no executive power, would not be connected with constitutional machinery, and that its effectiveness would depend upon accident.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of simple fact none of these objections are real. It would be a permanent organisation; it would become as much part of the working constitution as the Cabinet is; its executive authority would be real though not defined; and its effectiveness would be as regular as that of any other institution in a State governed by a democratic sovereign authority. In these matters rigid constitutions and hard and fast agreements give less guarantee of permanence and of certainty of result than loose relationships which depend upon a common spirit, a common history, a common racial evolution.

This Imperial Conference would discuss

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "The Empire and the Century," p. 44.

and practically settle the question of Colonial Governors; it would support a general Imperial view of native administration and assume, on behalf of the whole self-governing Empire, responsibilities for the subject races' government, education, and development; it would lay down the general principles upon which treaties should be made, and international agreements arrived at, even should it never become the Executive authority for settling these treaties; it would express the political problems of Imperial defence, and co-ordinate the opposing desires of the self-governing States to have independent forces of their own, and those of the military experts to have centralised control; it would discuss and indicate its views upon that vast miscellany of matters relating to Imperial life from cables to immigration laws, from Privy Council appeals to Imperial trade reports.

Its position can be clearly shown if we consider the part it would play as a treaty-making authority. At present treaties are made in Whitehall; after communications with any Colony which happens to be directly interested, and when this Colony

does not get all its way, it proceeds to grumble and declare that its wishes have been flouted. Under such circumstances a weak Government or an Opposition desirous of becoming the Government have terrible temptations placed in their way to oppose the Imperial authorities in order to gain local popularity. The recent arrangements with the United States over the Newfoundland fishing laws and with France over the New Hebrides are cases in point.

Evidently this is unfair both to the Colonies and the Mother Country. The provisions of a treaty should be a blending of local and Imperial interests, and as the larger interests rarely coincide with the narrower ones, friction is almost inevitable unless the representatives of the States are brought to agree upon an Imperial policy.

Canada has almost claimed that it is a right of self-governing States to be allowed to make treaties for themselves. When that happens, the Colonies might as well sever themselves from the Mother Country altogether. For, under present circumstances, the authority which makes treaties is the authority which ultimately controls armies. To give any of our Colonies the power to



embroil us in war, or to determine our relations with European powers, is to give the first shattering blow to Imperial solidarity.

But if the present Colonial Conferences were regarded as Imperial Advisory Committees, and if, in consequence, there were full and responsible discussions at them regarding our world policy, although the precise events of two or three years ahead could not be anticipated, the general policy of the Government could be discussed by the Conference ; the Imperial aspects of the particular local interests of the Colonies could be impressed upon Colonial statesmen ; the limits within which arrangements could be come to by the Imperial authorities with foreign States would be understood ; correspondence upon disputed points as they arose would be definite and would be conducted by Colonial Ministers aware of the full Imperial aspects of the case ; the Colonial view could not be misunderstood or minimised, and the treaty would carry the support not only of the Home Government but of the Empire—even if in every respect the Colony particularly affected were not pleased.

Of course it is easy to imagine how such an organisation would break down. As a

mere machine it is somewhat inchoate. That, however, is rather a commendation than otherwise. All that is really wanted is a formal recognition of Imperial solidarity, as free as it can be devised. That is the type of institution which yields best results. It goes not by the logic and rigidity of its construction, but by an accumulation of precedent and the growth of a spirit and method appropriate to itself.

If one has a clear idea of the functions and composition of an Imperial Conference, he must not permit himself to suppose that it can be created by a fiat. It must grow, and it will take some time to mature. To force it on will be to ruin it. We have always seen that self-governing States enter a federation most unwillingly, and, for some time after they have entered it, that they grumble at its inconveniences more than they feel gratified by its blessings. So it was with the United States; so it is to-day with the Australian States; so will it be as the Imperial States enter an Imperial unity which will be real and not merely nominal.

The important thing for us to do to-day is to make up our minds as to the form which Imperial unity ought to take, and



then to see to it that our Imperial thought and action tend to the realisation of that unity. Remote as that unity may appear to be, and suspicious of it as Colonial feeling may seem, one has only to study the evolution of the Australian Commonwealth to see how unity is imposed upon a people almost in spite of themselves. And with the shrinking of the world, the organisation of military forces, the growth in identity of old and new world politics, the imperative necessity of an Imperial policy which will be Colonial as well as British in its inspiration, Imperial unity will come upon us simply as the years roll on, or, one fatal day, there will be a misunderstanding, an agitation, a conflagration, a disruption. And whilst the force of events will be driving us, their logic and appropriateness will be becoming apparent to us. We shall cease to feel that we at home, and we only, must be the supreme Imperial authority; the Colonies will extend their views and feel their identity with a great world power; we both will be inspired by the humility of responsibility which a British Confederation of States must inevitably bear.

## V

### TRADE AS AN IMPERIAL BOND

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S facility for dashing off attractive programmes has brought into the discussion of Imperial politics a proposal to make trade an Imperial bond. Signs are not wanting to show that the proposal is dead, but at the present moment no consideration of Imperial topics ought to omit the Tariff Reform and the Imperial Preference propaganda. In this propaganda words have been used for the purpose of clouding issues and grandiloquent language for the purpose of playing sleight-of-hand tricks upon common sense. I shall content myself with stating as accurately as possible what the proposal means in actual trade facilities and in the opening up of markets.

The citadel of the position which the Tariff Reformers are attacking is Free Trade doctrine. Imperial Preference presupposes discriminating duties against the foreigner

upon the English market, and these duties must not be nominal and for revenue purposes, but must be sufficiently high to alter the course of the world's trade and be specifically designed for that purpose. Therefore, as a preliminary to an Imperial trading policy such as Mr. Chamberlain has proposed, Great Britain must be induced to abandon Free Trade.

This is not the place to discuss the relative merits of Free Trade and Protection as a trade policy for Great Britain. I content myself with stating the issue and with saying that the Labour Party is practically unanimous for Free Trade. One can understand how anxious the Tariff Reform League was to form a Trade Union branch, but since the Trade Unionists of influence and position in their societies who have associated themselves with this body can be counted on the fingers of one hand without exhausting all the fingers, space need not be taken up to discuss Free Trade in a volume dealing with Labour Party politics.

Moreover, we can dispense with this preliminary point and examine the Tariff Reform contention at its centre. Will the Empire accept Mr. Chamberlain's policy? If it

does, will it be strengthened in consequence? Both these questions must be answered by an emphatic negative.

Let us examine the trade policy of the Imperial States in relation to the trade interests of the Mother Country. Only when we have done this can we come to any practical conclusion upon these proposals for Colonial preference.

I shall begin with Canada. Canada is frankly Protectionist, though in the wheat-growing lands and in the West there is a strong Free Trade sentiment—indeed in these parts Free Trade is on the ascendant. But Ontario and Quebec are decidedly Protectionist. Working-class organisations, as a rule—though not a rule without exceptions—agree with manufacturers' associations on this point; and whilst these associations send delegates to England to tell us how patriotic it would be for us to give them preference on our markets, they pass resolutions at home demanding that whatever preference we may get on theirs shall not enable us to compete with the Canadian manufacturer. The fact is that Canada is determined to manufacture as much as it can for itself, and it will

give no facilities to the British manufacturer to capture anything beyond the residuum of the demand which Canada cannot itself supply. It not only protects itself by tariffs; it gives bounties to encourage manufactures.

It is impossible to say what Sir Wilfrid Laurier had in mind when he offered us a preference in 1897, but his Party had declared, in a resolution which it supported in the Dominion Parliament in 1892, that as Great Britain allowed Canadian goods a free entry upon the British market, Canada should reduce the tariff on imports from Britain. A careful study of the somewhat contradictory speeches which Sir Wilfrid Laurier has made on Canadian tariff leaves an impression on my mind that he made his proposals for a variety of reasons. It was a bid for votes by a politician; it was a step towards Free Trade by one who, whatever tariff he was proposing, declared himself a theoretical Free Trader; it was a move in the game that has been played for many years to get the United States to reciprocate Canadian business affections; in altogether a minor way it was a bid for special advantages being given on the

British market to Canadian goods. Since its enactment the greatest efforts have been made to increase the protection of the Canadian manufacturer.

The Imperial trade policy of Australia developed later than did that of Canada. There are three main reasons for this. Until Federation, Australia could not move as a nation; Australia is far more aggressively Protectionist than Canada—excepting New South Wales, which, having been Free Trade in sentiment, never thought upon the lines of an Imperial trade policy; finally, Australia being remote from Britain, and isolated from foreign powers, tends to develop a sentiment of independence and self-reliance.

But for some years the feeling in favour of Protection has been growing in the Australian states, as the Australian has committed himself more and more to a policy of a white Australia and an Australia where the workman has a specially large share of the wealth which he produces. Those racial and industrial aims of Australia appear to the Australian to require the assistance of a protective system which approaches to one of prohibition for goods which are, or can be, made in Australia. The Australian



Labour Party has carried this idea further and made it more logical and systematic than any other party in the world. It not only protects the manufacturer in his profits, but insists through Industrial Arbitration Courts and Wages Boards that some of the extra profits shall be paid away in wages. Having thus secured (apparently) the manufacturer and the workmen, it has turned to the third and last economic function in a community—the consumer—and it proposes to protect him by fixing the prices he has to pay after the manner that wages are now fixed.

Thus in Australia Protection has become, in a much fuller sense than it is in any other country in the world, a national policy. It is fixing itself like a million-rooted parasite in every fibre of the national life. Australia's economic policy is definite and absolute—Protection of the Prohibition genus. It goes as far beyond Canadian Protection as Canadian Protection is beyond Free Trade, and its kind of Protection is as different from the Canadian Protection as two policies called by the same name well can be.

There is in Australian politics, however, a small glimmer of a sentiment which runs counter to its economic policy. The



Imperial sentiment leads a section—some of the followers of Mr. Deakin—to offer lip-service to Imperial preference, and we must consider whether this section is likely to secure any modification in the Protective programme.

On a cursory glance we are not encouraged, for the leaders of the group have owed, and still owe, all political influence they have to their alliance with the Labour Party, and the sole ground for this alliance is that they stand for the Protection of which the Labour Party is the chief champion.

If we study their speeches our suspicions as to their trade policy are placed beyond dispute. Mr. Deakin is a Protectionist, and has declared many times that Australian labour should supply Australian demands. His acting Home Secretary, Mr. Mauger, has attributed the difficulties of finding openings for apprentices to engineering in Australia to the importation of English machinery. He has attacked English boots, candles, clothing, and has demanded their practical exclusion. Every Minister in the present Australian Cabinet has spoken in the same strain.

When the Imperial Preferentialists

drafted a Bill to embody their ideas, its inadequacy was apparent to every one. It lowered no duties in favour of the British importer, and it gave him preference in respect to goods of which only £900,000 worth came from foreign countries. "The Ministry," said one of its critics in the Upper House, "had made an attempt to translate this cry of Preferential Trade into law. But the Bill which was introduced dealt with not more than one-twelfth of the total trade between Great Britain and Australia, and in no single case did it propose to lower the tariff in favour of Great Britain. It was not preferential admission but preferential exclusion. It was a preference of shams and delusions, embedded in humbug, so far as Great Britain was concerned."

New Zealand presents no special features. Mr. Seddon, in 1903, secured the passing of amendments to the Customs Act which had the effect of increasing the duties on certain articles when imported from foreign countries, but the tariff in favour of the New Zealand manufacturer was in every case left at a substantial height.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For instance, boots from England had still to bear 22½ per cent.; furniture, 25 per cent.; hardware, 20

South Africa has had little chance of showing its hand. It has been in a disorganised state since an Imperial Trade Policy has become a subject of serious discussion. But since the South African Customs Union Convention in 1903 goods of British manufacture have benefited by a rebate of 25 per cent., or where the customs duty was one of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. *ad valorem* they have been admitted free. See table on p. 89.

This survey of the Trade policy of the Imperial States enables us to come to certain conclusions which seem to be inevitable from the facts.

These Imperial States are busy building up native industries behind a protection wall, some being still in the "infant industry" stage of protection, others having advanced beyond it but having adopted a policy of "new protection" in order to enable them to keep up a high standard of working-class income.

Every one of the States, in respect to products which it is manufacturing or trying

per cent.; earthenware, 20 per cent.; paper, 5s. per cwt. These duties make it perfectly obvious that New Zealand is also only to allow us to compete for the residue of New Zealand consumption.

*The slight effect of these preferences is seen by the following table; the war vitiates the Cape Colony figures.*

	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.
<b>NEW ZEALAND—</b>						
From United Kingdom	£ 6,504,484	£ 6,885,831	£ 6,851,452	£ 7,512,668	£ 7,982,340	£ 7,795,284
From Foreign Countries	1,516,240	2,018,218	1,905,766	2,140,533	2,261,772	2,119,215
<b>CAPE COLONY—</b>						
From United Kingdom	13,018,953	14,198,748	22,304,990	21,703,663	14,028,922	12,386,880
From Foreign Countries	3,631,691	4,417,507	7,841,969	9,827,416	5,080,171	4,052,370
<b>CANADA—</b>						
From United Kingdom	9,203,369	8,839,349	10,114,579	12,106,585	12,698,724	12,403,779
From Foreign Countries	27,207,188	27,613,374	30,607,940	34,693,717	36,707,121	38,951,710

to manufacture, regards British imports with the same hostility as it regards imports from other countries, and when it allows a preference to Great Britain over foreign rivals it does so only after it has amply protected its own producers. Every State is determined to produce everything it can by its own manufacturers, so that the residue of the demand which the native manufacturers cannot supply, and for the supply of which Preferential tariff gives the British manufacturer an advantage over the foreign manufacturer, is not at all regarded as the permanent perquisite of the Imperial manufacturer, but is to be absorbed by the native protected factories at the earliest possible time. The Colony for the Colonists is the basis of its trade and tariff policies.

The Imperial Preference proposals therefore amount to this, that we are asked to permanently change our trade policy for certain small advantages of a temporary nature on the Colonial markets. Moreover, the effect of the agitation so far has been to lead the Colonies to assume that the Mother Country is in some way neglecting their interests. It has not shattered in the least the Colonial determination to

exclude everything—both foreign and British—which they can manufacture themselves, and it has put obstacles in the way of the Colonies granting preference to the Mother Country, as Canada has done, not for the purpose of securing preference on the Home market, but as some recognition of the Imperial bond and of the sacrifices which the Mother Country has to make for Imperial maintenance.

But there is a general argument which the Tariff Imperialists use and which should be noticed. It is asserted that all the great European wars have been trade wars. "How came we to conquer India?" asks Sir John Seeley.<sup>1</sup> "Was it not a direct consequence of trading with India? And that is only the most conspicuous illustration of a law which prevails throughout English history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the law, namely, of the interdependence of war and trade, so that throughout that period trade leads naturally to war and war fosters trade." From this it is argued that just as trade rivalry has pushed us into war, so, only by trade union, or by an Imperial Zollverein, can the Empire be kept united.

<sup>1</sup> "Expansion of England," pp. 109, 110.



During the controversy which culminated in the election of 1906 this claim in some of its aspects received a great deal of attention, and indeed was so thoroughly threshed out in these aspects that nothing new can be said. The honours of the contest appear to me to rest with those who argued that a trading bond is an irritating bond; that however much trading advantage may be an element in Imperial stability, the placing of such advantage in the forefront of the *raison d'être* of Empire makes the Imperial fabric a gross erection of the commercial spirit—a kind of United States sky-scraper valued because of its utility in raking in rents—and such erections do not stand the test of time.

But there is a reply to the Trade-foundation-of-Empire School which is more fundamental and fatal than the damaging examination in detail to which it has been subjected. This school has never appreciated the trade policy of the Colonies. It has not grasped the significance of Colonial protection. Australia is as determined to retain its own market as Germany is, and though the Australian tells you that it will be a long time before he will have surplus manufactured products to export, he is doing



his best to hasten that time. Upon foreign markets Australia will compete with Great Britain in precisely the same spirit as America does. Now if Australia were willing to put itself in the position which Mr. Chamberlain foreshadowed in his Glasgow speech,<sup>1</sup> when he said that the Colonies would not seek to manufacture what we now send to them, provided we gave them a moderate preference on our markets, the Imperial trade school might well remind us of these European wars and warn us against allowing our Colonies to become separate fiscal entities. But they are separate fiscal entities. They have become separate national industrial units. In every competitive field where they appear, Britain, as much as Germany or America, is their enemy. "If we are to be killed," said an ex-President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, "it makes no difference to us whether it be by a Yankee or by a Britisher."

A reciprocity treaty with Germany or the United States is therefore just as likely to unite us and these countries in the bonds of

<sup>1</sup> October 6, 1903. His statement was modified when he published the speeches of his Fiscal campaign because he had come to see that the Colonies would never agree to it.

everlasting peace as Preferential Trade is likely to unite the Imperial States in an everlasting Imperial bond. If trade rivalry is bound to have the political influence which the Tariff Imperialists of the historical school claim for it, their arguments prove not the efficacy of Preferential Trade but its futility in view of the policy of industrial development and rivalry which the Imperial States have embarked upon. Preferential Trade would not diminish by one iota the trade rivalry which has already grown up between the Mother Country and the Imperial States. If the preference is sufficiently real to enable British goods to compete with Colonial goods on the Colonial market, the rivalry is more likely to be sharpened.

We must therefore make up our minds that the Imperial States are not to sacrifice a particle of their industrial interests for the sake of the Mother Land's trade. As they are Protectionist, I think we might reasonably expect them to give us preference over foreign producers who bear none of our Imperial responsibilities, and who in the event of war are more likely to be the enemies than the defenders of the Colonial peoples.

Even to such a policy strong economic

interests in the Colonies are opposed. There are, for instance, the manufacturers who use raw material, such as dyes. They would oppose any preference to the Imperial States on the ground that such preference would increase the Colonial cost of production—or they would assent to it only on the ground that they had higher Protection for their finished produce and so be able to increase prices to the Colonial consumer.

Free Trade within the Empire is not a practical policy as yet. In Canada the Free Trade movement is not losing ground although the industrial centres of Quebec and Ontario are Protectionist ; but, owing to the alliance between Labour legislation and Protection in Australasia, the Free Trade movement there has received a decided setback. The same is true of New Zealand, and South Africa will probably insist upon going through the weary process of Protection, more Protection, still more Protection.

For what advantages Imperial Trade brings to Imperial stability the Labour Party looks in a totally different direction from that of Conservative Imperialism. Imperial markets do not afford opportunities for sufficiently important negotiations. Low

Imperial postage rates, the same coinage, special facilities provided by the State for spreading commercial information, though savouring somewhat of the parish pump in contrast with the grandiose pageantry of the proposals for an Imperial Preference, are, nevertheless, more substantial and practical.

But what of the sea? Imperial trade suffers no more serious handicap than that imposed upon it by shipping rings and railway companies which exploit the Imperial needs of transport for their own purposes, which hamper the ready flow of Imperial trade, and, for an insignificant percentage, turn the British seaman off the waters in favour of the Lascar.

Here the Labour Parties of the Empire come in, and that of Australia has led the way. Already a Royal Commission appointed by the Commonwealth House of Representatives has considered the question, and has collected figures which are available for any Australian Government which desires to take action. On the other hand Mr. Sidney Buxton, by reducing the cost of postage on British magazines to Canada, will do more for genuine Imperialism than all the poems and speeches launched by perfervid poets and

talkers upon the heads of the British public.

Preferential trade is the proposal of individual capitalists who desire to make profits out of our Imperial connections; the Imperial organisation of trade routes and facilities is the proposal of the Labour Party which desires the establishment of an efficient means for the exchange of material and intellectual productions throughout the Empire.

## VI

### THE DEPENDENCIES

IT is sometimes said that the more developed races have no right to demand an exchange of goods from the Tropics. I do not think that that view can be maintained. The Tropics can yield much to keep the Temperate lands in comfort and to sweeten life for them, and the Temperate lands have a right to ask from the Tropics some of their desirable productions. The world is the inheritance of all men. Tribes and nations have no right to peg off parts of the earth and separate them from the rest as much as though they had been withdrawn to the moon.

But this right of the Temperate Zone populations to enjoy the products of the Tropics does not override the superior right of the Tropical peoples to be treated as human beings. The white nations which exploit the Tropics economically assume responsibility for the natives, and how to fulfil that responsibility is the kernel of the problem of dependency government. This

responsibility, however, may be regarded from a worthier point of view than as a consequent of economic exploitation. A community may well claim that it has a duty imposed upon it to spread the blessings of its civilisation over the earth. Morality has a universal sway, and by reason of its *impe-rium* the more developed nations are brought into a position of something like guardian and teacher of the less developed nations.

That is the theory. The danger is that the theory may be used to justify a totally inconsistent practice. National egotism rather than moral destiny may be the moving spring of the nation which brags about its "white man's burden," and as a matter of experience this high ethical justification has been more honoured by breach than by observance. Instead of the more developed nations having sent their educational and moral agents to aid the development of these backward peoples, they have sent their exploiters. They have begun by uprooting native civilisations, by destroying the economic expressions of these civilisations—such as tribal lands, by forcing the native mind into new grooves which that mind does not fit and never can fit. One hears the British official condemn the tribal



system because it does not produce British virtues, and he points to native specimens of self-help and British individualism, who are tragic grotesques. One sees schools where native children are brought to be moulded into coloured Englishmen (I was present whilst some native children in a Fiji school were taught to march and drill to the tune of "Bonnie Dundee," the words of which they had committed to memory and were singing); one is brought to meetings where Hawaiians are taught all the iniquities of American political machine methods; one is shown barrack orphan asylums where kind women dote upon poor little coloured outcasts. It is hard to utter a critical word upon it all. Those responsible were so single-minded and so enthusiastic. But in spite of this lavishing of care, the native dies—dies of disease, we are told—dies because he cannot stand the physical infirmities of the white when they attack him. This, too, is a delusion. The disease that the white man has given to the black is fearful, but it does not explain the mysterious fading away of the native races. They seem to be bewitched when the white man comes. The failure is psychological. The native finds his old world to have vanished, and the new one

is alien to him. He turns his face to the wall and dies. He does not understand the game. "Bonnie Dundee" rather than phthisis is his poison. In some places, with disgraceful ferocity, we have killed his body; in others, with the very loftiest intentions, we have killed his soul—and in both cases the results are the same. When he survives, he is not the old native. He is another being, without a past and without a future.

One of the most glaring faults of our Colonial Office is that it has no conscious concern in experimenting with native policies. We have the most magnificent opportunities for studying the conditions of native life, and the use we make of these opportunities is insignificant. Men like Sir Godfrey Lagden and Sir Marshal Clarke have contributed most admirable studies to the administration of natives, but they are sealed up in the dulness and irrelevancies of dust-laden blue-books. It is left to Chicago University to send a commissioner to study native administration, and to an American publisher to issue the results, whilst our Civil Service Commissioners set examination-papers with apparently the sole end in view of refraining to test the latent practical capacity of the men who are to be

responsible for our racial burdens. Any reform in our native administration must be preceded by an alteration in our Civil Service tests. A reform in the Civil Service is essential to the democratisation of the Empire.

Our fundamental mistake in native policy is that we regard the native as a Briton in the making. Even Radicals fall into that error when they assume that the end of our native administration must of necessity be the self-government of the people. The development of their own organisation, not the imposing of the ends of our national life, should be the purpose of our government of dependencies. In some cases it ought to be the re-establishment of the rule of the chiefs; in others, a restoration of a kind of semi-democracy in which the people are partly enfranchised or elect part of the governing authority. In every case the native should be protected from the blighting exploitation of white men's capitalism; obstacles should be placed in the way of, rather than encouragement given to, the break-up of his tribal economic system; his traditional methods of legal administration should not be supplanted by ours which he cannot be taught to respect and often not even to understand; even his catalogue of

crimes should not be made the same as ours because he cannot understand our notions of right and wrong ;<sup>1</sup> finally, the less we interfere with native administration the better. We require Residents more than Governors.

Such a change is essential to the continuance of democracy at home. For, so long as we regard the native as some one whom *we* must rule, we are attempting the palpable impossibility of ruling democratically at home and despotically abroad. The result will be that our own democracy will be tainted, and our democratic systems will crumble, eaten to the heart of their supports by the autocracy of our dependency rule. "Free nations cannot govern subject provinces."

Our great dependency, India, offers special problems of its own which cannot be adequately dealt with here. Its present condition is profoundly unsatisfactory. Its civilisation, unlike that of Fiji or Jamaica, is equal, if not superior, to our own. It contains races that have had a proud and a powerful past. Its acquisition was by a conquest of peoples who

<sup>1</sup> One of the most disquieting sights one can see whilst visiting our tropical dependencies is crowds of natives dressed in prison clothes wandering carelessly about the streets, running errands for officials, and apparently held in no disfavour by the freemen and quite innocent of any shame.

brought an organised resistance to bear against us, and not by a diplomatic subjection of primitive tribes. The Indian communities have developed complex political forms and have stubbornly resisted disintegration on the one hand and assimilation on the other. Therefore it is pre-eminently true as regards India that our Government should win the confidence and assent of the people.

But here again our fatal incapacity to put ourselves in the position of a civilisation different from our own shows itself. We have impoverished India by blessing it with land legislation which would be a boon to the Scottish peasant; we have administered its affairs as though it were an ancient English city proud of official banquets and honoured by special trains; we have put on our usual airs and our little upstart officials carry into its remotest corners British superiority and create and uphold a system of social parasitism with all its attendant vices. India is pre-eminently the perquisite of the classes. They rule it; they exploit it.

Its problem is very complicated. In the first place it is not a national but a geographical expression. It cannot be ruled from one centre. Even under the most extreme form of democracy it must be a federation of

practically independent States, and, whether we like it or not, we cannot refuse to admit that the differences which keep its races apart are so acute that some over-authority will always be necessary to secure religious and civil liberty and peace.

The immediate reforms necessary are a lightening of India's financial load by relieving it of the Imperial burdens which it now unjustly bears, and a readjustment of taxes; the extension of local and State self-government, and further opportunities for natives to be employed in public offices; the freeing of the Press. The tide of reforming anxiety has receded far since Lord Ripon's day, and upon the bare sands Mr. Kipling and his kind have pitched their tents. They have entertained us with their art, and they have flattered us with their panegyrics. But India still lies an unsolved problem. If our Imperialist trumpeters have deafened our ears, India's voice has nevertheless not been stilled. The strident assertion of the magnificence of the British political genius has allayed no pangs of famine and soothed no grievances.

Hitherto our dependency rule has had the levelling effect of a steam-roller rather than the vitalising effect of a fresh breeze.



## CONCLUSION

WE live at a time when the Fates are busy nurturing Destiny. But the life which is below appears but confusedly at the surface, and we dispute and get angry with each other as to its meaning.

We are certain that old political faiths no longer give us safe guidance ; that the shibboleths of half a century ago are no longer the open-sesame to political wisdom. We are in another epoch of thought. The principles of Conservatism as we once heard them preached, equally with the principles of Democracy as we once heard them professed, are now relics of a generation that has passed and has left its dwelling-places in ruin and decay.

From this paralysis of age and confusion of birth a new party has arisen with a new gospel. Like all parties that grow from the bosom of nature and in the fulness of time—and that are, in consequence, to last—the Labour Party appears to some to be but



an old party, and its principles as ancient as the hills. In a sense that is correct. But newness in Party politics does not depend upon discoveries of new proposals but in co-ordinating into a system of thought old experiments, in making the rule what have hitherto been exceptions, and our guides and philosophers what have hitherto been casual wayside acquaintances, in revivifying old principles by bringing them afresh into touch with life.

This is what the Labour Party has done. From a fresh point of view—that of the man who labours for a living—it is approaching questions of religion, art, politics, administration, and it is hammering out the principles and expressions of an industrial state. It has not been born in one country; it has appeared in all. It is therefore not the product of national circumstances, but of the stage of civilisation which the world has now reached. It expresses needs which are pressing themselves upon the attention of every industrial country under heaven. In this respect it is like the Liberal epoch which died away in the strife of Nationalist exclusiveness and jealousy that has dominated western policy for the last forty years.

Liberalism with its political democracy, economic free trade, religious toleration was a world movement—the movement of the liberated intellect ; Socialism (the inspiring principle of all Labour Parties whether they know it or not) is the next world movement—the movement of the constructive intellect. Being historical, it does not quarrel with historical facts. It contents itself with explaining them, and with apportioning blame and praise amongst the people who moulded them ; but it does not seek to go back upon them when once they have passed beyond the stage of contemporary change—when once systems of government and of thought have adjusted themselves to the events. The Labour Party therefore no more thinks of discussing whether the Stuarts should be restored to the throne than it does of debating whether we should break the Empire to pieces. But it approaches Imperial problems with the politics of the industrious classes as guide on the one hand, and the internationalism of its nature as guide on the other. If it feels the pride of race, it understands that other peoples can respond to the same thrill. Its Imperialism is therefore not of the aggressive or the bragging

order ; it does not believe in the subjection of other nationalities ; it takes no pride in the government of "other" peoples. To its subject races it desires to occupy the position of friend ; to its self-governing Imperial States it seeks to be an equal ; to the world it asks to be regarded as a neighbour.

For some years the thought of force has dominated national policies. Europe, weary of the strain of steering steadily towards justice and frightened by the threatening things which lie upon such a course, has frankly lapsed into the mood of militarism, of tariffs, of suspicion. And yet there is not a country in all the West but would escape with gladness from its awful imprisonment in the frowning fortresses of aggressive nationalism to which a resort to force always dooms a people. The spell is to be broken only by one of the nations boldly walking out from the imprisonment. What nation is more fitted to do that than we are ?

After a lapse of years, the Labour Movement in England stands once more in the forefront of the Labour movement of the world. Wherever Parliament is supreme and political Democracy established, the tactics and the principles of our Independent

Labour Party are being adopted, and a new friendship has sprung up between us and the Continental working-class movement. Who is to measure the opportunities which the British Labour Party now has, if it has the courage to put its hand to the great and difficult work which invites its energies? It is not a Factory Act, or Trade Unionist Party. It is a Party in British politics, and its interests are as wide as British interests, and its aims are nothing narrower or meaner than the ends of British development. In every one of our Imperial States it has its kindred Parties—indeed in Australia, the Labour Parties are either in office or are the second largest Party in the State. Perhaps their isolation from the rest of the world has made them a little parochial, and they, least of all the Labour movements, reflect the characteristic spirit of internationalism.

But even now, before the Australian Labour Parties have been brought into very close contact with the European Labour movement, one can observe a striking difference between the attitude of these Parties to us at home and that which the other Colonial Parties bear to their home counterparts.


The nationalism of the Labour Party is mainly industrial. When it cries "Australia for the Australians" it means Australian work for Australian workmen, not a system of parochial politics. It distrusts Downing Street as much as any Party does, but it does not find it impossible to conceive of an Imperial alliance. It is jealous to guard the self-government of Australia, but it has not the petty spirit of nationalism which is one of the few unpleasant features of Australian life. The Labour Party more than any other Australian Party is possessed of the spirit which would allow it to take an organic place in a self-governing Empire with Imperial standards of administration to which local policies would conform.

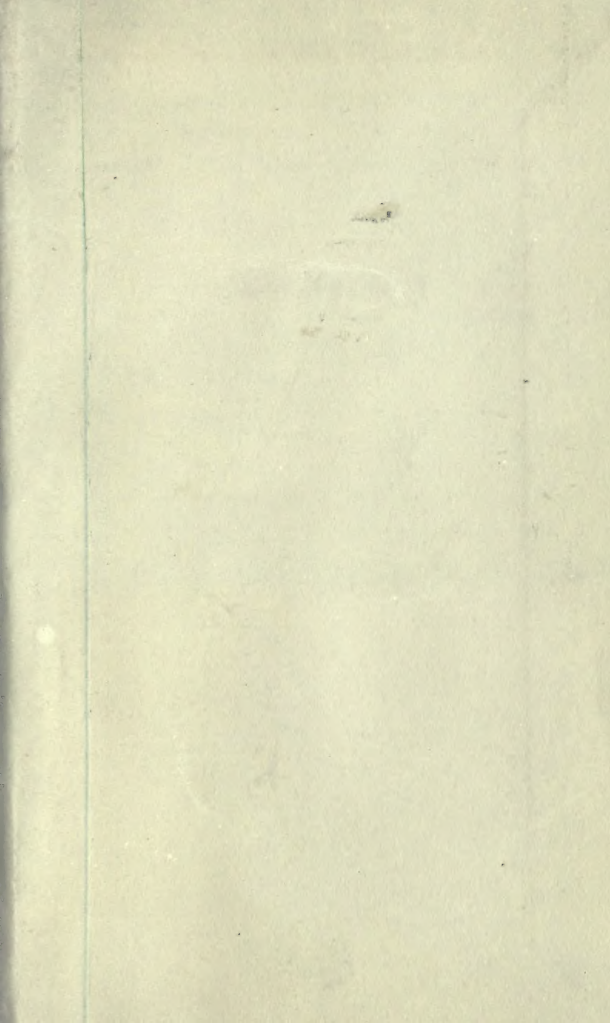
In Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Labour Parties grow. Their economic problems are the same as ours; their fundamental political aims are the same as ours; their democracy is of the same species as ours. They have no interest in a class dominance of the Empire; the South African War and its sequel have taught them much and have drawn them closer than ever they were to our movement here;

they have no confidence in Conservative rule at home ; we are their allies ; we and they together must build up an Imperial policy if that policy is to be democratic. We have been kept apart because intercommunication was difficult and was in hostile hands. As yet it must be admitted, when we approach Colonial problems we do so from unfamiliar points of view ; when they approach ours they are also strangers to the considerations that weigh with us. But the fundamental similarity of the aims and methods of the Parties must speedily tell and produce an understanding between them. Then will begin a new chapter in the story of our Empire.

THE END

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
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